THE INFLUENCE OF METER ON THE HOMERIC CHOICE OF DISSYLLABLES

By John A. Scott

It is well known that many of the most common Greek words, such as ἄγαν, πάνυ, τόπος, σοφός, νόμος, are not found in Homer, while λόγος is so rare that the two passages in which it occurs are often doubted or emended. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff *Homerische Untersuchungen*, p. 20, supports his theory for the late composition of the first book of the *Odyssey* by assuming that λόγος of vs. 56 and νόμος of vs. 3 in the reading of Zenodotus, are "notorisch unhomerisch in der spätern Zeit ganz geläufig." Yet these two words never secured more than a foothold in epic poetry; Wellauer gives no example of νόμος in Apollonius, and Paschal[1] gives none from Quintus Smyrnaeus; Elderkin[2] shows that λόγος is found but once in Apollonius and once in Quintus, also that it is practically absent from all late epic poetry. The fact that these two words are as rare in latest as earliest Greek epic makes it impossible to assign any force to the argument of Wilamowitz that their assumed appearance in the first book of the *Odyssey* establishes its lateness, since this would make it later than the Posthomerica. There is no fact to support the statement that these words became "ganz geläufig" in hexameter verse, the only verse from which an argument should be drawn.

This paper will be confined to a discussion of three words, σοφός, νόμος, λόγος. Why should Quintus, e. g., have used λόγος but once? Homer has two well-attested examples, O 393, α 56, both in the text of Aristarchus, both certainly in the Homer known to him. The fact that Homer used this word but twice does not explain the practical absence from Quintus, since the latter never carefully regulated his vocabulary in accordance with Homeric usage; Paschal, p. 22, shows that Quintus has a vocabu-

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[1] *A Study of Quintus of Smyrna* (University of Chicago dissertation).

[2] *Aspects of the Speech in the Later Greek Epic*, pp. 1 ff. (Johns Hopkins dissertation).

lary of 3,800 words, of which 800, or more than one-fifth, are not in Homer, but even this one-fifth does not fairly represent the divergence, since many words rare in the early epic are here used with great freedom, e. g., Homer uses δῆρις but twice, Quintus employs it nine times in the first book; καῖπερ, found once in Homer, is twice used in the first book, and this same first book has the non-Homeric ἐϋσθενής six times, while the non-Homeric forms καταντίον, κατέναντα are found five times in Book i. These examples, taken from many, show that Quintus used with equal freedom words rare in Homer or words common, while many of his most frequent words are not in Homer at all.

The fact that Quintus does not use words so well-known to him as σοφός, νόμος, λόγος deserves some other explanation than Homeric imitation.

There must have been some external force acting both on Homer and on Quintus. These words were known to Homer, since λόγος is used twice and the root is found in the verbs λέγω, μυθολογεύω. Homer does not have σοφός, but has the abstract derivative σοφίη, O 412, nor does he have νόμος, but has the abstract εὐνομίη, ρ 487. The absence of a word may be no proof of the poet's feeling, since Homer does not use the word ῥόδον, yet must have held the rose in high esteem, as the words ῥοδόεις, ῥοδοδάκτυλος, show. It will be observed that these three words, νόμος, σοφός, λόγος are pyrrhics, or dissyllables with short penults, and that no pyrrhic can begin a verse, end a verse, or follow the bucolic diaeresis. I shall try to explain the practical absence of these three words from epic poetry on the basis of the meter. My thesis is this: Greek epic poetry prefers dissyllables with a long penult, and where choice is possible, generally chooses the long form, using the form with the short penult sparingly or not at all, that is, the absence of these three words is due to the meter rather than to meaning or ethos.

The prooemium of the *Iliad* has 12 dissyllables with long penults and but 3 with short. The prooemium of the *Odyssey* has 18 with long penults, and 9 with short. The first 100 dissyllables in the *Odyssey* show 66 with the penult long, 34 with it short, while of the first 100 in the *Iliad* 63 penults were long,

37 short.   Repeated tests, taken at random, in the *Iliad* and
Odyssey show that at least 60 per cent. of the dissyllables have
long penults.   The first 100 dissyllables in Aesch. *P. V.* show but
33 with long penults, against the 66 of the *Odyssey*, the same
number in the *Septem* have 40 with the penult long, 60 with it
short.   Careful examination of many chance passages in Aeschylus
shows about the same ratio.   Homer then in every five dissyl-
lables has at least three with the long penult, Aeschylus scarcely
two.   This preference is as marked in the later as in the earliest
epic poetry, since the first 100 verses in the Posthomerica have
111 dissyllables with long penult and but 75 with short.   This
simply puts the pressure upon epic poets to choose in general,
where choice is possible, the word or form with the long penult.
There are many words which must be used, since there is no ready
synonym or parallel form, such words are ἐγώ, ἐμός, θεός, ἔχω, ὅτε,
περί, ἀνά, κατά, κτλ., so that using these words the choice of
pyrrhics must be further restricted.   It is clear from a comparison
of Homeric dissyllables, having 60 per cent. of the penults long,
with the 40 per cent. of Aeschylus that Homer decidedly prefers
the trochaic or spondaic word to the pyrrhic or iambic.   How is
this preference to be shown?   Sometimes by metrical lengthen-
ing, as in ὕδωρ B 307, δριμύς Λ 270, ἀνήρ B 553, διά Γ 357, Ἄρες
E 31, φίλε E 359, ὄφις M 208, ἔπει δ 13; but, except in polysyl-
lables, this is violent and spasmodic, as Schulze *Quaestiones
epicae* has shown.   An easy and ready way lay before the poet,
namely to choose the synonym or form with the long penult in
preference to the one with the short.

Homer has many dissyllables with a long initial syllable where
Attic Greek has a short, such as καλός, ἠώς, μοῦνος, νοῦσος, κοῦρος,
ἴσος, ξεῖνος, γαῖα, ποίη, στεῖνος, καίω, τίνω, φθίνω, φθάνω, στείνω.
Although the long form of most of these words is due to an ori-
ginal digamma and Homer does not use the short form, it may well
be questioned whether the short form was unknown to him and
the long a deliberate choice, since we have ξενίη, ξένιον, but only
ξεῖνος; μονωθείς but no μόνος; στείνω in the simple verb, while the
compound is περιστένεται; ὕω with the penult long, yet the same
vowel is short in the derivative Ὑάδες; φθίνω with the penultimate

vowel long, but short in the alternative form φθινύθω; Homer has only ἠώς, but the shorter form appears in ἐωσφόρος Ψ 226.   The presence of these shorter forms shows that before the Homeric poems had reached their present shape the loss of a digamma within a word did not compel compensatory lengthening, although for most of the words we have no proof that the poet had both short and long forms from which to choose.

In the following words we can see the Homeric choice, as their comparative frequency shows: αἰεί occurs 238 times, ἀεί 3; ῥεῖα, as a dissyllable, 53; ῥέα, as a dissyllable, 5; εἴσω 53, ἔσω 7; yet the simple ἐς is found twice as often as εἰς; λίην 32, λίην 10; πατρός 125, πάτρος Z 479, only, Ludwich *Aristarchus* II. 353; πρόσσω 14, πρόσω 4; νηός 94, νεός 14; νῆα 114, νέα 1, and even that one pronounced as a monosyllable; νῆες 53, νέες 12; νηῶν 85, ναῦφιν 12, νεῶν 42; νῆας 191, νέας 16; oblique cases of χείρ, where there are the two forms, χειρί 85, χερί 3; these three datives are the only forms of this word with a short penult, the short stem appearing in the form χερσί, but the ending makes it a trochee; πλεῖος 12, πλέος 1.   The shift between these two forms is purely metrical, as the one example of the pyrrhic form shows, υ 355:

εἰδώλων δὲ πλέον πρόθυρον, πλείη δὲ καὶ αὐλή,

ἕως, "until," is scanned with initial short syllable but once in Homer, β 78, with initial long about 50 times; τέως with initial long 9, short 2; υἱός with initial long over 300, initial short 12; πνέω 1, πνείω elsewhere and often; κενός 1, elsewhere κεινός, or the trisyllable κενεός; of the indefinite relatives the forms with long penults, such as ὅστις, ὅττι, occur far more frequently than the shorter forms ὅτις, ὅτι; so the forms with the long penult, τόσσος, ὅσσος, predominate over the pyrrhics ὅσος, τόσος; χρεῖος 6, χρέος 2; κρείων 14, κρέων 1; θάρσος, the trochee, 12, the pyrrhic θράσος but once.   In the above selected cases we had the same word now with a long, now with a short penult.   In the following list we shall see how in synonyms a dissyllable with a long penult takes the place of one with short.   Homer has no iambic ἐκεῖ, yonder, but instead has κεῖθι, κεῖσε, κεῖθεν, yet the form with short penult must have been known to him as the form ἐκεῖθι shows; Homer

has no πάνυ, but trochaic πάγχυ; τίπτε takes the place of τί ποτε; εἶδαρ with long penult, yet the verb is ἔδω, ἔδομαι; ἔγχος and the stem form as shown in δουρός are far more common than the pyrrhic δόρυ; φλοῖσβος, δοῦπος, but no ψόφος; φύζα 7 times, φύξις 3, while the iambic φυγή is found but twice; πέδον only in the form πέδονδε which gives the long penult; χλαίνη, but no χλανίς; ἦμαρ over 200 times, ἡμέρη but six. The ease with which ἦμαρ fits into the dactylic verse, the difficulty in using ἡμέρη is sufficient explanation for the difference in their use. The use of πνοίη for the true form πνόη seems to be due to the meter.[1] ἐγγύς 46, ἄγχι 62, πέλας 2; ἔρση, ἐέρση (for dew), but no δρόσος; μῶλος 7, μόλος 1; ἠδέ ten times as often as ἰδέ and αὐτάρ five times as often as ἀτάρ; ὠκύς more common than ταχύς, ὦκα 74, ταχέως 1; while the comparative forms θᾶσσον, τάχιστα, forms with the long penult, occur 76 times. The pyrrhic word for bow, βιός 17, the synonym, with long initial syllable, τόξον 113. ἔμπης has taken the place of ὅμως, except in M 393, as a v. l. λ 565. δράκων with the oblique cases such as δράκοντα furnishing a long penult crowds out ὄφις, used as an exact synonym M 208, even here the meter forced ο under the ictus.

Many pyrrhic or iambic words developed a corresponding form with long initial syllable, e. g., δίχα, διχθά; τρίχα, τριχθά; μίγα, μίγδα, the pyrrhic form μίγα is not in Homer; Τρίκη, Τρίκκη; ἐνί, εἰνί; δύο has a parallel δοιώ; ὁδός, οὐδός; πολύς, πουλύς; πνέω, πνείω; πλέω, πλείω; θέω, θείω, v. Schulze Quaestiones epicae 276. Many pyrrhics are given long penults by the addition of δε, e. g., πόλινδε, πέδονδε; Homer has λίς to avoid the iambic λέων; θέαιναι to avoid θεαί; the use of the pyrrhic λίπα is avoided by eliding the last vowel, and the short penult in χρέω disappears in synizesis, so that the word is always a monosyllable.

A comparison of Homer with Aeschylus, as well as the comparison of Homeric words, shows his great preference for dissyllables with a long penult.

Ludwich Aristarchus II. 313: "Wealth of spondees is a peculiarity of the older Greek hexameter," 336, "The Greek language has far more dactylic than spondaic elements." How then could

[1] Solmsen Laut- und Verslehre, p. 113.

Homer give this spondaic tone to a dactylic language? Clearly in two ways, by the rather violent method of poetic lengthening, or by the choice in kindred words or forms of the one with the long rather than the short vowel. Schulze has shown in all parts of his *Quaestiones epicae* the epic reluctance felt in metrical lengthening, especially in other than polysyllabic words. The spondaic tone is clear in Quintus also, so the path open to Homer was open to him, and while he differs much from Homer in vocabulary he rarely uses a non-Homeric pyrrhic or trochaic word.

Paschal, pp. 22 f. gives a list of 99 words found in Quintus which first appear in the *Homeric Hymns*, Hesiod, early lyric poets, or Pindar; not one of these 99 words is a dissyllable having a short penult, if we except πέδον which appears in Homer under the form πέδονδε, and φάραγξ which, however, appears in Quintus under the form φάραγξιν, giving the coveted long penult, so it is no exception. While there are no words of the 99 of the metrical form of λόγος, there are nine dissyllables with a long penult, viz., κισσός, πρέμνον, ζῆλος, σίμβλος, σμῆνος, ὕδρη, βληχρός, λαιός, τερπνός. This metrical restraint laid upon Quintus furnishes an explanation for the fact that he called his poems λόγοι, v. Paschal, p. 11, yet used that word but once in the poems themselves.

There are few better attested words or roots in Homer than λόγος, the noun is found twice in the best manuscripts and was not questioned by the Alexandrians, while the same root is found both in λέγω and μυθολογεύω. The cutting-out of all words in Homer that appear but once or twice would leave few passages intact, yet this word is fortified not only by its double use, but also by verbs from the same root. It is impossible to draw any sure definition of λόγος from the two sentences in Homer, and I can see but little difference in the Homeric use of μῦθος from that of λόγος in the later lyric or tragic poets. Homer contrasts μῦθος with ἔργον, a 358, I 443, Σ 252 in the same way later writers contrasted λόγος with ἔργον. μυθολογεύω, where both words are combined into one verb, argues for similarity of meaning. Apollonius Sophistes in his *Lexicon to Homer* defines μῦθος by one word, λόγος. Nothing is gained by assigning the two Homeric

verses in which λόγος appears to later poets, since later epic poets preferred μῦθος quite as much as Homer. All later epic poets had these two Homeric precedents, they had the ideas which in conversation, tragic, and lyric poetry were expressed by λόγος; why, then, having these Homeric examples and good established prose and poetic usage did they choose μῦθος? Simply because the epic verse prefers dissyllables with long penult rather than those with short. Hence no νόμος, but θέμιστες, with long penult; no σοφός, but δαίφρων, περίφρων, and other compounds of φρων or μῆτις, each with a long penult. This may explain the Homeric preference for ὄφρα with the long penult rather than the pyrrhic ἵνα, and why the genitive singular shows the early οιο with long penult, or the late ου, but so few traces of the intervening οο, with its short penult. The use of the same word with double quantities as in v 355; πλέον, πλείη, E 31; Ἄρες, Ἄρες must have caused a metrical jar which would have been avoided had there been a fitting synonym close at hand.

The history of νόμος in Homer and the elegiac poets is as follows: Homer does not use the word itself, but it must have been familiar to him, as he uses the derivative εὐνομίη, ρ 487, which presupposes a νόμος. A scholar as eminent as Zenodotus felt it perfectly in keeping with Homeric ideas, so did not hesitate to assign this word to α 3. The word does not appear in the dactylic verse of Solon, except in the abstracts δυσνομίη, εὐνομίη, ii. 32, 33. However, he does use νόμος in an iambic verse, 32. 16. In fact this word never appears in the hexameter verse of the elegiac distich, but only in the so-called pentameter. In the Hiller-Crusius edition νόμος is first found in the elegy in Theognis 54:

οἳ πρόσθ' οὔτε δίκας ᾔδεσαν οὔτε νόμους,

and in the same position, Theognis 290:

ἀνδρῶν, ἡγέονται δ' ἐκτραπέλοισι νόμοις,

each time at the end of the verse, or just the position where the pentameter differs most from the hexameter. A dissyllable with short initial syllable cannot close a hexameter, it can a pentameter. It is more than probable that it is the meter and not the meaning

which puts this word in the second and not the first verse of the distich.

Homer has no σοφός, but the word was known to him, since he uses the derivative σοφίη. Archilochus has no example of this word in the dactylic elegy, but uses it in an iambic trimeter, 44. 1. The only elegiac poet to use σοφός freely is Theognis, who uses it once in the hexameter, seven times in the pentameter, and five of these seven at the end of the verse, a position not allowed in the dactylic hexameter. (See the recent *Index* prepared by Mary Corwin Lane, "Cornell Studies," 1908.) As has been said λόγος[1] is found well attested twice in Homer and the root appears in λέγω, μυθολογεύω. Even though sanctioned by Homeric precedent Solon does not use it, nor does it appear in elegiac poetry except rarely, being practically confined to Theognis. According to the *Index*, just mentioned, it appears in the distich but fourteen times down to and including Aristotle, and of these fourteen six are at the end of the pentameter.

In elegiac poetry λόγος, νόμος, σοφός are found at the end of the pentameter more frequently than in all the other positions combined.

In any given verse Homer might have used σοφός, νόμος, λόγος if he chose, but each time the metrical need influenced him to choose a substitute for that particular word. That the influence should have shown itself in each individual case and have kept the first two of these words from the poems and made the last so rare is a pure accident, an accident due to epic preference for dissyllables with long initial syllable.[2]

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[1] It may seem that the preference for dissyllables with long penult would have shown itself in a restricted use of ἔπος as well as λόγος. Few words adjust themselves to the needs of the verse so easily as ἔπος, since it begins now with a digamma, now with a vowel, and has such dactylic forms as ἔπεα, ἐπέεσσι, ἔπεσσι, κτλ. This unusual metrical adaptability is quite sufficient to account for its free use in epic poetry.

[2] Danielsson's *Zur metrischen Dehnung* has not been quoted but has been of great service in preparing this paper. The *Index* by Gehring was constantly used, as well as Ebeling and Capelle. The Homeric readings are those in the last edition of Ludwich.